

CCC Meeting Highlights
February 2, 2005
Berkshire Community College

The Citizens' Coordinating Council for the Site ("CCC") met Wednesday, February 2, at Berkshire Community College. Below are the highlights of the meeting.

I. Updates:

EPA

1.5 Mile Reach:

Dean Tagliaferro reported that Phase 2 of the project, between Elm Street to just below Dawes Avenue, has been completed and contractors are removing the two 54-inch pipes from the riverbed. EPA will switch from the gravity bypass system back to a sheet pile method for Phase 3 of the project which begins just downstream from Dawes Avenue and continues on to Pomeroy Avenue. The dam will remain in place to help facilitate cleanup activities in Phase 3. Fred Garner Park will be closed to the public during this phase of the work and the water treatment system will be moved to the park. While EPA is working in the river, GE will be working on floodplain properties. The work will be closely coordinated.

EPA held a public information meeting in mid-January to discuss the work in the 1 ½ Mile Reach with residents in the affected neighborhood.

Discussion:

Judy Herkimer asked when EPA expected to hit the 50,000 cubic yard ceiling at the on-site consolidation areas. Dean Tagliaferro answered that EPA is already shipping waste off site and when we hit the ceiling, everything else will be shipped off site.

Judy Herkimer asked if the Rochester NH facility was located on an Indian reservation. Dean Tagliaferro answered that he did not know the answer to this question.

Judy Herkimer asked why high flow events are not good to test. Dean Tagliaferro replied that EPA samples bi-weekly on Wednesdays, and occasionally these bi-weekly sampling events correspond with a flood event; however EPA does not specifically target flood events.

Judy Herkimer asked if a column could be added to the report documenting the levels of contaminants in the waste being shipped off site so that these numbers could be compared to the relevant Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure ("TCLP"). EPA will add a column with relevant standards.

Judy Herkimer asked if there were any spots in Phase 2 of the river where EPA had to put rip rap over oil because it wasn't possible to get all of the oil out. Dean Tagliaferro explained EPA's process for determining when to proceed with backfilling. In some situations, residual NAPL

remained within the fractured bedrock. There was no NAPL present below the Dawes Avenue bridge.

Judy Herkimer asked if the GE monthly report could be sent to the Cornwall Library as a hard copy. She then asked if a hard copy and a CD Rom could both be sent. Andy Silfer replied that this would be possible to do in the future.

Rest of River:

Susan Svirsky reported that new information for the Human Health Risk Assessment ("HHRA"), in response to the Peer Review comments, is scheduled to be released on February 16th for public comment. Susan Svirsky handed out the list of new information to the group.

Discussion:

Shep Evans asked if there would be another round of peer review of the Revised Human Health Risk Assessment. Susan Svirsky replied that the peer review panel's job is complete but that EPA will prepare a responsiveness summary for comments received during the upcoming comment period.

Consent Decree:

Tim Conway presented to the CCC an upcoming modification to the Consent Decree's natural resource restoration obligations. In the near future, EPA plans to submit to the Court for approval a proposed modification to the Consent Decree. In general, the proposed modification would provide that a minor portion of the GE obligation to perform natural resource restoration/enhancements at the Lyman Street parking lot will take place at an alternate location, a riparian strip of land at the East Street Area 2-South area of the site. The parties to the Decree have agreed on the substance of the modification, and the natural resource trustees have determined that the new area for enhancement is of equal or greater habitat value. The modification basically results in GE leaving approximately 20,000 square feet of pavement in place at its Lyman Street Parking Lot, in an area away from the River, and instead removing approximately 20,000 additional square feet of pavement/concrete at an area adjacent to the 200-foot riparian buffer that will be constructed on GE property adjacent to the river between Newell and Lyman Street. GE will meet recreational cleanup standards for the entire riparian strip, including the additional 20,000 square foot area being proposed.

Discussion:

Judy Herkimer asked Tim Conway to clarify how big the buffer area would be and who would own it. Tim Conway explained that the buffer is approximately 214 feet x 1400 feet and is owned by GE. The cleanup requirement for the buffer is a recreational standard. There are restrictions on construction in the buffer.

Barbara Cianfarini asked how the modification would impact PEDA with respect to making space available for reuse. Tim Conway answered that the buffer zone is not on PEDA's property; however PEDA does support this modification to the Consent Decree.

Another participant asked how much of an increase would be made to the riparian strip. Tim Conway answered that it would increase the riparian strip by approximately 14 additional feet.

Another participant asked if EPA had looked at other options? Tim Conway replied no.

Jane Winn asked whether the buffer is a long strip that slopes towards the river. Susan Svirskey answered that it is a gentle slope with some sheet run-off.

GE

Fill Program:

Dick Gates reported that things are quiet on the residential program front. GE sampled one property last year and is still sampling on Valentine Rd. Three properties are slated for cleanup next year.

Dick Gates also updated the group on two new MADEP sites that will be investigated soon. The first is an undeveloped remote area in Lakewood, which includes four parcels. The second is East Street Area 1 South for which GE received approval in late 2004 from MADEP to investigate and sample underground utility pipes and talk to owners about their sump pumps and possibly sample sump pumps in the area.

Discussion:

A meeting participant asked where on Valentine Rd. GE was sampling. Dick Gates answered that GE is sampling on vacant parcels amongst a new development on Valentine Rd.

A meeting participant asked if the remote parcels in the Lakewood area were already in the residential program lineup. Dick Gates answered that the remote parcels were in the lineup already but had been pushed off so that GE could focus first on residences.

A meeting participant asked if while investigating sumps, samples come up as hits what would be done and what if the sumps are dumping into the sewer. Dick Gates responded if that during the investigation GE finds a problem, they will deal with it. He added that he believed it is illegal to connect a sump to the sewer system.

Floodplain Properties:

Dick Gates also reported on Phases 3 and 4 of the floodplain properties. Phase 3 mirrors the work in the river, between Dawes and Pomeroy Avenues. GE recently completed sampling 28 properties in the Phase 3 area and is designing the remedy to coordinate work on the properties with EPA's work in the river so that GE follows EPA down the river. Dick Gates reported that GE has just started the sampling program for Phase 4, including properties at the end of Brunswick Street and the park itself. GE's floodplain remediation is expected to begin in June 2005 and wrap up in December 2006.

Silver Lake:

Andy Silfer reported that GE has submitted a bench scale capping project to EPA and MADEP for review and hopes to start the bench scale study soon and wrap it up towards December 2005 with a pilot study in 2006.

Plant / Brownfields:

Mike Carroll reported that GE is sampling the Unkamet Brook Area and East Street Area 2 North. GE removed buildings 61, 62, and 66 last year and will landscape this area. GE completed the prep and chemical and asbestos abatement for 42, 43, and 44 and will be evaluating demolition bids and awarding a contract for the demolition of these structures. The demolition is expected to begin in March and take until June / July 2006.

Mike Carroll also announced that the transfer of the 20s and 30s complexes to PEDDA is approaching. The Environmental Restrictions and Easements, which were a major milestone, have been completed and the final inspection is underway. EPA expects to confirm the completion of work by mid-March, paving the way for redevelopment of the site.

Discussion:

Jane Winn expressed her concern that preferential pathways have been left in place on the property. Tim Conway answered that the agreement between PEDDA and GE is a companion agreement to the Consent Decree and details what GE is responsible for if new contamination or recontamination is found. Also, Paragraph 12 of the Decree includes additional information on PEDDA's and GE's responsibilities after the transfer of property to PEDDA.

MADEP

Anna Symington updated the group on MADEP's oversight of the investigation at Morewood Lake that has been undertaken by the Country Club, not GE. The Country Club conducted an investigation and risk characterization of barrels found in the lake and then continued follow up and observations of the lake, due to its connection to the Housatonic River. MA DEP decided to take a cautionary approach and had fish samples taken from the lake last fall. Anna reported that the preliminary results indicate that bass from the lake contain elevated levels of PCBs which are comparable to levels found in fish from the Housatonic. MADEP will issue a final determination on a fish consumption advisory for Morewood Lake once MADPH evaluates the data.

Anna Symington also updated the group on Fred Garner Park where MADEP has been overseeing a removal action by the City of Pittsfield of barrel remnants. The sampling results will be shared when they are ready.

Discussion:

A meeting participant asked if any sediment samples from Morewood Lake were evaluated. Anna Symington responded that sediment was sampled and the results came back okay.

Judy Herkimer asked if MA DEP knew who was fishing in the lake, and whether people were ice fishing on the lake which would necessitate MA DPH posting the lake as soon as possible. Anna Symington answered that she was unaware of ice fishing on the lake.

II. Presentation:

As requested at the November 2004 meeting, Dean Tagliaferro presented the results of GE's and EPA's post excavation monitoring activities in the ½ Mile Reach and 1 ½ Mile Reach.

Discussion:

A discussion followed regarding sediment load on excavated areas.

A meeting participant noted that according to the presentation, the PCB lipid content in mussels still exists, despite dropping. Susan Svirsky replied that EPA does have some numbers on PCB lipid content in mussels from the Connecticut River and will share this information with the group as a comparison.

Barbara Cianfarini expressed concern about contaminated creatures dying in the river and adding their body burden of PCBs to the sediment. Susan Svirsky and Dean Tagliaferro responded that there are some turtles and fish in the river and that during the excavation activities the turtles are removed from the work area and head downstream. Benthic organisms, such as crayfish are removed along with the contaminated sediment during the excavation activities.

Barbara Cianfarini asked if there is an NRD component that includes moving creatures back into the river following the excavation activities. Susan Svirsky replied that creatures will move back into the river without assistance.

III. Upcoming Meetings and Other Items:

Angela Bonarrigo highlighted the ongoing and upcoming public comment periods and asked the group about the need for a March CCC meeting. The group agreed to tentatively schedule a meeting for Wednesday, March 2nd and to cancel it if it is not needed.

Judy Herkimer asked about EPA's intentions with regards to future meetings with the CT CCC and expressed her opinion that these meetings should continue.

Judy Herkimer asked that an Action Item list be reinstituted as part of the CCC. EPA agreed to institute an action item list.